Exports from SEZs

*399. SHRI RAVULACHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the exports from the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in the year 2002-03 and 2003-04;

(b) the share of the exports from SEZs in the overall exports; and

(c) the details of the proposals to expand SEZ mechanisms to boost the manufacturing and exports?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Exports from Special Economic Zones during 2002-03 and 2003-04 were of the order of Rs. 10056.62 crores and Rs. 14003.89 crores (provisional) respectively;

(b) The share of exports from SEZs in the country's overall exports during 2003-04 was about 5%.

(c) The Policy relating to SEZs is constantly reviewed in consultation with trade and industry so as to bring about improvements for facilitating exports. Some of the major incentives announced during 2003-04 include 100% income tax exemption for 3 consecutive years, 50% exemption for the next 2 years of Off-shore Banking Units set up in SEZs, Income Tax exemption to the extent of 50% of ploughed back profits to SEZ units, treating supplies from the Domestic Tariff Area to SEZ units at par with physical exports. Further, approvals have been given for setting up of 26 SEZs, of which one Zone has since commenced exports while 4 zones are ready for operation. Other approved SEZs are at various stages of implementation.

Poverty ratio

MOO. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the minister of URBAN EMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been any significant decline in the poverty ratio during the last five years;

(b) if so, the details thereof, year-wise and the reasons therefor, and

(c) the target set for the Tenth Five Year Plan for reduction in poverty ratio and the steps proposed to be taken to achieve the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN EMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION (KUMARI SELJA): (a) and (b) The Planning Commission estimates the population living below poverty line at national and State level from the large sample surveys on household consumer expenditure conducted by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) at an interval of approximately five years. The latest two such surveys relate to the period 1993-94 (50th Round) and 1999-2000 (55th Round). As such, the estimate of persons living below the poverty line is not available on an annual basis. The poverty ratios estimated from the last two large sample surveys data, for the year 1993-94 and 1999-2000, given below, shows that the percentage of persons living below poverty line in the country has come down from 36% in 1993-94 to 26.1% in 1999-2000:

Percentage of poor

Year	Poverty ratio (%)		
	Rural	Urban	Total
1993-1994	37.3	32.4	36.0 27.1
1999-2000	23.6	26.1	

This reduction in poverty could be attributed to the general growth process and direct income generation of the poor arising from various anti-poverty programmes introduced from time to time by the Govenment for their upliftment.

(c) The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07) has set a target of reduction in poverty ratio by 5 percentage points by 2007.

The policy for alleviation of poverty in the country revolves around three-pronged strategy. This includes: (i) acceleration of economic growth (ii) human and social development through literacy, education, health, nutrition, meeting of the minimum needs, elevation of social and economic status of the weaker sections of the society, etc; and (iii) direct attack on poverty through employment and income generating programmes and assets-building for the poor.